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July 3, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Obama:

I write regarding your request to Congress for emergency appropriations to address the crisis occurring at the southwest border involving thousands of unaccompanied children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. This is a crisis especially in my district which includes 83 miles of Arizona's border with Mexico. This crisis was created by the federal government's inability to secure our borders and fix our broken immigration system and it must be addressed immediately.

In fiscal year 2013, Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Tucson Sector reported 28 percent of the nation's apprehensions and 49 percent of the nation's drug seizures. Because of this failure to secure the border, Southern Arizonans are concerned about their security and safety on their land and in their own homes. Drug and human smuggling cartels that have brought unaccompanied children to the United States know that our border is not secure. They have taken advantage of that fact, putting thousands of children at risk and using new gaps in our border to recruit smugglers to bring drugs into the United States.

The humanitarian crisis at the southwestern border can also be blamed on the federal government's failure to reform our broken immigration system. It is true that Congress has not passed immigration reform legislation that that could fix our broken system. However, the administration's failure to prepare for the predictable efforts of criminal organizations to exploit misunderstandings of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy has left Southern Arizonans on their own to deal with the tragic results.

U.S. Border Patrol agents work hard every day to secure our borders and keep the people I represent safe, but the recent influx of unaccompanied children across our border has made a difficult task even more challenging. Already stretched thin, our Border Patrol agents have reported to me that they feel the security of the southwestern border has been compromised because they have been pulled from their mission to process and provide care to the children who are crossing daily. Our agents have done a commendable job under the circumstances, caring for these children. But caring for children is not our Border Patrol agents' job. Agents should be out in the field, working to secure our borders.

Since I came to Congress, I have been fighting for increased security through additional agents and technology on the ground and action to fix our broken immigration system. I have fought for robust funding for Border Patrol agents, worked with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to require CBP to develop specific measurements so we can gauge progress, and have supported legislation to fix our broken immigration system. These are resources and policies that Arizona needs. Arizona is still waiting for action and we cannot afford to wait any longer.

I welcome your request for supplemental appropriations to expand border security efforts during this crisis and beyond. While much of the current surge of children crossing into the United States has occurred in CBP's Rio Grande Valley Sector, I urge you to consider the current and future needs of CBP's Tucson Sector and all Southern Arizonans. Based on conversations with the people I work for in Southern Arizona, including ranchers and local elected officials, and other relevant stakeholders, I ask that any new appropriations include the following assets for Arizona, to address our border security issues:

- (1) Additional Border Patrol agents in the Tucson Sector; for increased horse patrols to monitor the rugged terrain east of Douglas to the New Mexico state line and more agents actually on the border, not 10, 25 or 50 miles away from the border;
- (2) Additional resources to reimburse localities for services provided to unaccompanied children, including hospital care and police supervision. Arizonans cannot once again be left with the bill for the federal government's failed policies;
- (3) Additional support for swift and humane processing and return of unaccompanied children to their home countries;
- (4) Additional support for the identification and processing of adults traveling with unaccompanied children;
- (5) Additional support for aggressive deterrence strategies in foreign countries to make it explicitly clear that migrant children will not be eligible for citizenship under DACA or immigration reform;
- (6) Additional support to prosecute persons in the United States who knowingly and purposefully encourage individuals in other countries to break U.S. immigration laws;
- (7) Additional resources for radar and other technologies, including tethered aerostats, to increase situational awareness of illegal traffic on the border;
- (8) Additional funding for District Courts and any other court or judicial service needed to meet the increased workload resulting from the influx of unaccompanied children.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,



Ron Barber
Member of Congress